

Granite State Home and Garden
Immediate Release

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Go To a Fair (Or Two!)

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We have arrived at one of the best seasons of year in New Hampshire – Fair Season. This is a chance for farmers to stop making hay or milking cows for a few minutes and visit with friends; a time for kids and grown-ups to strut out their best animals into the show ring; and most importantly (in my opinion) an ideal venue for all of agriculture to show off to the vast majority of the population who are not involved in producing the food, fiber, and plants that feed, clothe, and beautify the state.

It is critical is critical for everyone, whether or not involved in agriculture every day, to be aware of the scope and value that farming brings to their communities and their state, and there is no better format than an agricultural showcase like the fair. Encourage everyone that you know to visit one (or more) of the 11 agricultural fairs in New Hampshire this season.

The fair is an ideal time for farmers and 4Hers to tell people about what they do, but while we are learning about what to feed to a cow or how to groom a sheep, we also need to remind ourselves about a few of the risks that come with owning or being around animals, specifically animal diseases.

It has been said that, "I learned everything that I need to know by kindergarten." Since most of disease control can be viewed as common sense, this is likely true. As your mother always told you – **"wash your hands"**; and encourage your children and family members to wash their hands – both before and after touching any animals. By washing your hands before touching someone's prize show animal, no one can say that you brought a disease on your hands, intentionally or unintentionally, from some other animal at home or in the show to their animals. When you wash your hands after touching the animals and go have lunch, you can be sure that your upset stomach was caused solely by eating too much great fair food and nothing more!

A simple and effective way to do this is to carry a small container of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with you. There are also stations in the barns at every fair with hand sanitizer for your use, as well as restrooms with the old standards – soap and water. The fairs provide all of these for your convenience. Use them!

In conclusion, make sure to have fun at the fair; make it a point to learn something new about farming and why agriculture is important to you and your community; and be certain to enjoy the animals. Have a great fair season!

For more information contact Steve Crawford at the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets, & Food at 271-2404; scrawford@agr.state.nh.us; or <http://agriculture.nh.gov/>. Or contact your local fair at <http://www.nhfairs.com/>.

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